VIII WORLD TAMIL CONFERENCE

Thanjavur

CULTURAL PROGRAMMES

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January

1.1.1995 to 5.1.1995

"When we speak of Carnatic Music, we should not forget to mention the contribution of the people of Tamil nadu from ancient times to the realm of music. The famous work Pura Nanooru, shows that Tamil people had acquired remarkable skill in Music from an early period of time".

"Bharathanattiyam is one of the proudest possessions in our rich traditional heritage. It is an intricate art which has a language, grammar and literature".

– Dr. J. JAYALALITHA

Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu.

FOREWORD

Reputed civilisations in the past have been established and nurtured to glory on the river banks. Riverine culture is a historical and global phenomenon and occupies a high place in the history of human endeavour. Our ancestors solemnly believed that the waters of the holy rivers not only cleanse the body but also purify the soul. Cauvery, the holy river, is therefore not surprisingly spoken of reverentially as a mother with love and affection for all; She is often described with poetic license as a bright damsel traversing the contours of the legendary Chola Empire.

Thanjavur has the unique distinction of being the capital of the Chola Empire, eversince the days of King Vijayalaya - I. The banners of the Empire fluttered aloft when Raja Raja, the Emperor, extended his frontiers to distant lands far beyond the azure seas. He was not merely the most famous ruler of the extensive Chola Empire but also an enlightened patron of letters, arts and culture. The Brahadiswara temple at Thanjavur is a fitting memorial to the architectural splendour that his Empire exemplified . It remains to this day a commanding and impressive land mark of modern Thanjavur. King Raja Raja and his son Rajendra patronised performing art purported to be of divine origin such as the classical dance, folk arts and music which continue to be part of

Thanjavur ambience up to this day. The Chola period was also remarkable for its sculptures and bronzes which are masterpieces of their kind. The Eighth World Tamil Conference under the dynamic stewardship of ***Dr. J. JAYALALITHA*** *Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu seeks to recapture the literary and cultural glories of the past and place before the visiting dignitaries and the public, some glimpses of this rich heritage.*

The cultural events scheduled between 1st January to 5th January, 1995 include Bharata Natyam recitals, folk dances, carnatic music concerts, mythological and historical dramas, select instrumental music; traditional arts such as Karagam, Kavadi, Oyilattam, Kummi and Kolattam have also been added to lend an indigenous flavour.

Spacious grounds such as Annai Sathya Stadium, Thilagar Thidal, Police Parade Ground, University Auditorium, Brahadiswara Temple, Raja Rajan Mani Mandapam in various parts of the city have been chosen as venues for these colourful events. It is earnestly hoped that this magnificent offering to the wider public will serve as an appropriate evocation of the splendour of ancient art and cultural heritage of Tamil Nadu. We hope you will enjoy the rich cultural bonanza that awaits you.

S. Parthasarathy, I.A.S.,
Secretary to Government,
Information & Tourism Department
and
Member–Secretary
Cultural Committee, VIII World Tamil Conference.

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Dr. K.V. Balasubramaniyan Thanjavur.	–	"

Thiru. SHEIK CHINNA MOULANA

Hailing from Karavadi village in Guntur District of Andhra Pradesh, Sheik Chinna Moulana Saheb achieved proficiency even at a very early age, under the tutorship of his father, Shiek Kasim Saheb and later under Adam Sahib, both renowned Nagaswara Vidwans of Andhra. With a view to learning 'Thanjavur Bhani' he underwent training with Sri Rajam and Duraikannan Brothers of Nachiarkoil. He has settled down at Srirangam and founded the Saradha Nathaswara Sangeetha Ashram there, with the sole intention of imparting knowledge of music especially playing of Nagaswaram to younger generation. He is also a honorary professor in the Raja's Music College at Tiruvaiyaru and a State Artist of Tamil Nadu Government. He has been performing all over India and in foreign countries too. He went to SriLanka several times. He toured U.S.A. and Canada in 1973 under East-West Exchange programme where he was awarded the title of *'Nadhaswara Acharya'* by Vassar College, New York. He visited Hongkong in 1982 as an Indian Cultural Delegate to the 7th Asian Arts Festival. In 1987, he went to the Soviet Union to participate in the Festival of India and to Germany in 1991 to perform at the Festival of India. France too had been in his itinerary. He has as many as 18 titles to his credit, the most cherished being the *'Kalaimamani'* of Tamil Nadu Government (1976) Sangeet Natak Academy (1977), Sapthagiri Vidwan mani at Tirupathi (1984), Sangeetha kala Nipuna of Mylapore Fine Arts Club (1993) and *'Isai Perarignar of the Tamil Isai Sangham'* in the same year - *'a rare double'* having been given by the former President of India,

Thiru R. Venkatraman and by Dr. J. Jayalalitha, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, respectively. In 1988, he was selected for the senior Fellowship of the Sangeet Natak Akademy and in 1993, for *'Emeritus Fellowship'*. He has been honoured with *'Padmasri'* title by the Government of India in 1977.

Dr. M. BALAMURALI KRISHNA

From a child prodigy to a trail blazer who has travelled all over the World winning thousands of admirers everywhere, Balamurali Krishna continues to remain a musical monarch reigning in the firmament of Carnatic music for the past five decades.

Born in 1930 to Sri Pattabiramayya, a well known musician who could play Flute, Violin and Veena, and Smt. Suryakantamma, an excellent Veena player, Balamurali inherited a musical heritage and naturally he is not only a vocalist but also an instrumentalist. He plays viola, violin, veena, mridangam, kanjira etc.,

His first concert was at the age of eight. He is a *'Vaggeyakara'* by *'divine grace'* in his own words and he has composed songs in Telugu and Tamil and set the music for them. He has also rendered some of Purandaradasa's composition in Telugu which have created a lasting impression on his admirers. His varnams and Tillana are very popular with dancers. His composition are beautiful blends of lyrical beauty and melody. He has published them in a book form. *'Murali'* is his mudra, in his kritis. His crowning achievement was the composition of songs in all the 72 melakarta ragas. He has created a few new ragas too, like Mahati, Sumukham etc. He has acted in a few films and done music direction for some and won National Awards too. Titles have came in abundance from all sources; 'Sangeetha Kalanidhi' of the Music Academy (1979). Padmasri (1971), Padma Vibhushan were some of the highest honours.

Endowered with a wonderfully vibrant, wide ranging magnetic voice with an inlaid

sruti and laya alignment combined with perfect control in all the octaves and crystal clear enunciation of the Sahitya, Balamurali is a *"musician of the century"* ; He has set up his own *'Murali Ravali'* organisation and is conducting research with a view to form music therapy for curing diseases.

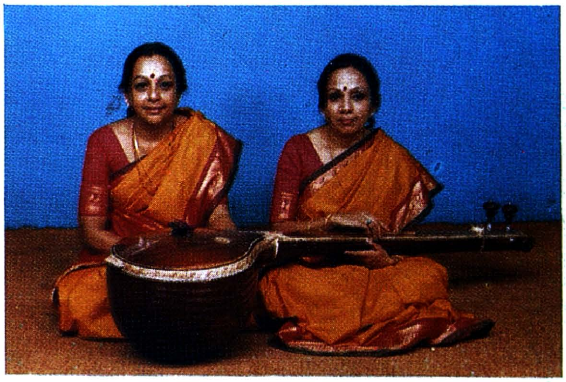
BOMBAY SISTERS

Born in Trichoor, Kerala to late Sri N.C. Iyer and late Tmt. Mukthamabal, Tmt. C. Saroja and Tmt. C. Lalitha popularly known as Bombay sisters had their education in Bombay. They were initiated into Carnatic music by Late Sri H.A.S. Mani. Thereafter they received Government of India Cultural Scholarship—first Saroja for the years 1958-60 and then Lalitha for 1961-63.

To get intensive training on the scholarship, they settled down in Madras and joined the Government Music College at Adayar, when Musiri Sri Subramania Iyer was the Principal. They came under the special training of Sri T.K. Govinda Rao, the Principal disciple of Musiri. They still continue to get guidance from Sri Govinda Rao.

They have secured innumerable awards and titles - *'Sangeeta Choodamani'* from Sri Krishana Gana Sabha (1991) *'Sangeeta Kala Nipun'* from the Mylapore Fine Arts Club (1994) and *'Kalaimamani'* from Tamil Nadu Government (1992) being the most notable ones.

They have made extensive tours abroad since 1983 to give concerts in U.S.A., U.K., Canada, Singapore, Malaysia and the gulf countries.



For the record sale of their cassette on *'Lalitha Sahasranamam'* in Tamil, Super T Cassette Company presented them *"Golden Disc"* the first of its kind for classical carnatic music.

Thiru. T.L. MAHARAJAN

Trichy Loganathan was a most sought after play back singer in films in the fifties and sixties. His son is Maharajan and naturally the family heritage continues. Maharajan, born on 9.3.1954, had a regular training in carnatic music from Mayuram S. Krishnamurthy Bhagavathar (a disciple of Mudikondan Venkatramier—a Pallavi expert). He has been giving concerts in Tamil Nadu as well as in other neighbouring States.

Director A.P. Nagarajan brought him into the Tamil Film field when he was just twelve. So far he has rendered more than five hundred songs in film under various Music Directors. He has carried his music abroad too - to Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Singapore, France, Switzerland, London, Canada and South Africa and has builtup a great reputation there. He has received many awards from various organisations like Mylapore Fine Arts Club, UNESCO, Film Fans Association, Kanchi Kamakoti Diamond Jubilee Committee etc.,

Starting from the age of ten, he has a three decade service to music - classical, light and film.

Selvi.S. SOWMYA

Brimming with self confidence and endowed with guts and verve - that is young Sowmya. A pet disciple of late Dr. S. Ramanathan, she is as versatile as her guru in handling rare ragas and innovative too.

Born on 16.4.1969 to Dr. M. Srinivasan, she had her initial training in music from her father and later came under the tutelage of Dr. Ramanathan. Academically too, she has been a complete success, with a rank and gold medal in B.Sc. (Chemisty) and M.Sc. (Chemistry) from I.I.T. Madras.

Her first appearance at Music Academy was in 1986 and she got the MLV award as an outstanding young vocalist. She has given more than 400 concerts all over India. It will be worthwhile recording that she was a child prodigy who could identify ragas and enunciate their scales at the age of two and a half. A regular participant to propagate Tamil Songs through Ramalingar Pani Mandram, she has given a cassette containing Ramalingar's *'Arutpaa'*.

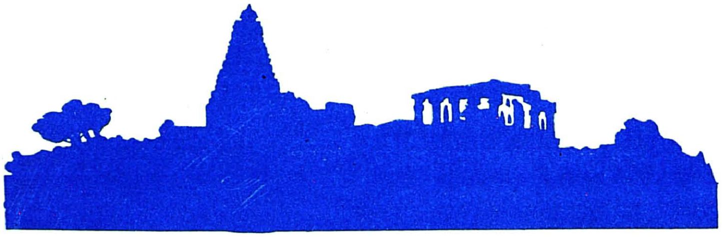
Thiru. P. UNNIKRISHNAN

One of the foremost vocalists among the youth today is P. Unnikrishnan. A lively personality with a mellifluous voice, he has attained musical maturity in double-quick time. Crowds throng in large numbers to listen to his sweet music.

With the musical heritage, Unnikrishnan started to learn music when he was nine under V.L. Seshadri. He became the prime disciple of Sangeetha Kalanidhi Dr. S. Ramanathan in 1983 and started his musical career from 1987 after obtaining his Degree in Commerce, with great vigour. After Dr. Ramanathan's demise in 1988, he has been taking training and guidance from violinist Savithri Satyamurthy, who herself was a disciple of Dr. Ramanathan. It has been a fruitful tutelage from a great guru and his disciple to acquire the essence of their style.

His knowledge is deep, repertoire wide and with a honey like voice, he has been able to establish himself. He has secured several prizes as a young vocalist from Music academy, Sri Krishna Gana Sabha, Indian Fine Arts Society and Naradha Gana Sabha.

In 1991, he was awarded the title of *"Yuvakala Bharathi"* by Bharat Kalachar and in the same year he obtained a special prize from Music Academy for rendering an exquisite aalapana.



Thiru. PAPANASAM ASHOK RAMANI

Papanasam Sivan, the renowned Vaggayakara was lovingly proclaimed as *'Tamil Tyagayya'* His music is passing through the veins of his family members. His two daughters Dr. Rukmini Ramani and Smt. Neela Ramamurthy were good musicians. In the third generation, we have young Ashok Ramani, who has made it to the concert arena and as popular as his grand father. In the past 10 years, he has won plaudits as a vocalist, though he started his musical career as a Mridangist.

Papanasam Ashok Ramani, a lengthy name no doubt, started his music lessons at the age of seven (he was born on 15.9.1964) in Miridangam playing from veteran teacher, Kumbakonam Rajappier. After nine years of training he ascended the concert stage accompanying eminent vocalists like Sri. D.K. Jayaraman, Tmt. D.K. Pattammal and Sri T.V. Sankaranarayanan.

In his 11th year, he began learning vocal music from his mother, Dr. Rukmini Ramani. For his higher training he went to Dr. S. Ramanathan when he was 17 and continued his course for 5 years. Even while he was learning, he got an opportunity to give his first vocal concert at Sri Krishna Gana Sabha in 1984, during their *'Goluashtami Series'* and also notched up a prize as a young musician from the Sabha.

The next 10 years saw him perform all over India in Madras, Bombay, Calcutta, New Delhi, Hyderabad, Thiruvanathapuram, Bangalore/Mysore to name a few important cities.

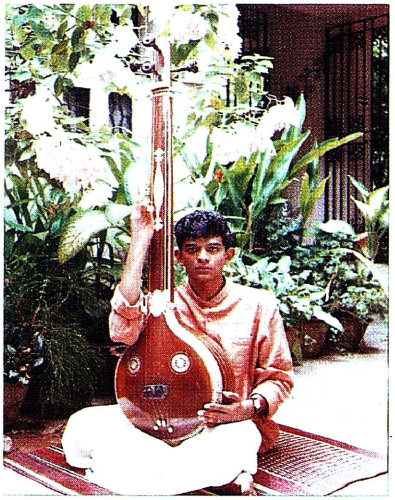
While carrying out his concert assignments with alacrity, he continues to learn. After the demise of Dr. Ramanathan, he became a pupil of Calcutta K.S. Krishnamurthy and after 3 years, he was taken in by Palghat K.V. Narayanaswami, who happens to be the President of Papanasam Sivan Rasikar Sangham and who has sung sivans songs in plenty. The lesson continues.

He has been made the *'Yuva Kala Bharathi'* in 1994, by the Bharat Kalachar during the December season. He has won several prizes in his school and college days in competitions, and in the various Sabhas, like Music Academy, Sri Krishna Gana Sabha, Narada Gana Sabha, Mylapore Fine Arts for his *'Performances'*. He is not only a musician but also a Degree Holder in Mechanical Engineering.

Thiru.T.M. KRISHNA

It is an encouraging sign for carnatic music that more and more youth are taking interest in the art and are coming up as performing artists. The future of Carnatic music thus appears rather bright. T.M. Krishna is just eighteen, but has been in the field since 1988, as an up and coming artist. Having learnt music under Sri. Seetharama Sarma, Principal, Kala Peetam for a decade and also with a Government of India Culture Talent Scholarship from 1988, he has been giving concerts in prestigious sabhas like the Music Academy, Bharat Kalachar, Kapali Fine Arts, Youth Association for classical music etc. In 1992 he secured an award from the Music Academy for *'Alapana'* in the sub junior slot.

With a sweet voice and a deep knowledge, he has been improving his repertoire, so that he can satisfy any type of audience. In addition to the compositions of the Musical trinity - Thyagaraja, Muthuswamy Deekshidar and Syama Sastry - he has learnt quite a number of tamil Songs, Purandaradasar's Padas, Tillanas, Jawalis etc.



Thiru.T.N.KRISHNAN

One of the top most violinists for more than four decades, Sri T.N. Krishnan is *"an embodiment of suswara when he touches the Shadja. It is ambrosial suswaram"* according to Sri C.V. Narasimhan, a former top official in the United Nations Organisation at New

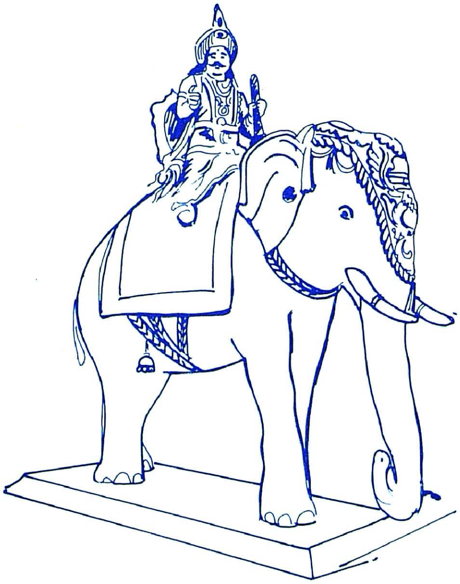
York. With rich alignment to sruti Prof. T.N. Krishnan has been enthralling music lovers for the past several years through his impeccable accompaniment to all front rank vidwans like Ariyakudi, Semmangudi, Madurai Mani, G.N.B., Alathur Brothers etc.,

In later years, he began giving solo violin concerts following the example of late Dwaram Venkataswami Naidu. When his daughter disciple Viji came up, he had her as his *'support'* joining a formidable Duo' Later still, his son disciple Sriram joined the 'ensemble' making it a Violin *'Trio'*.

Taught by his father, T.N. Krishnan acquired ample knowledge and started his musical career at a very young age. The performing artiste joined the Tamil Nadu Government Music College as a teacher and was its Principal during 1978-85. He shifted from Madras to New Delhi, when he became Head of Carnatic Music in the University of Delhi between 1985 and 1993. He also functioned as the vice Chairman of Sangeeth Natak Akademy for three years (1992-94). He was a visiting Professor too, at centre for World Music, Berkeley, California.

T.N. Krishnan has not only performed all over India, but also toured U.S., U.K., Germany, Australia, U.S.S.R., Austria, Yugoslavia, Singapore, Malaysia etc., He was honoured by the Government of India with the title of Padmasri in 1974 and Padmabhushan in 1992. The Sangeeth Natak Akademi Award was his in 1974 and the crowning glory came when he was made *'Sangeetha Kalanidhi'* in 1981. In later years, other sabas have conferred him titles like

'Sangitha Kala Sikamani' etc. The Carnatic Music Association of North America presented him with the award of *'Sangeetha Sagara'* alongside of Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer.



Thiru. KUNNAKUDI VAIDYANATHAN

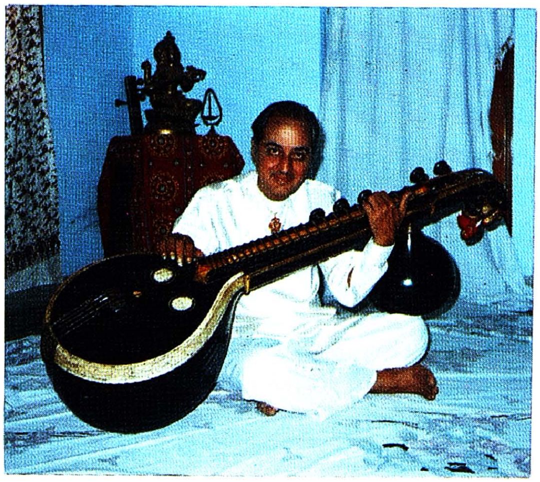
A multi-faceted artist, Kunnakudi Vaidyanathan has won laurels in many fields.

Born to Sri Ramaswami Sastry, an erudite scholar in Sanskrit, Tamil and Carnatic music, and Smt. Meenakshi in 1935, Vaidyanathan learnt violin as desired by his father. He modelled himself on Mysore Chowdiah who deviated from the traditional technique in choosing a seven stringed violin. He joined HMV as a freelaunce Music Director, mainly for producing Bhakthi songs. He has to his credit as many as 780 records sung by all leading artists. In 1968, he became a film music director. He gave a new turn to film music. In 1970, he won the best cine music director award, from the Tamil Nadu Government. His innovations brought him laurels. He was made the Resident researcher for Raga Research Centre by Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, Dr. J. Jayalalitha. He also was chosen to be the Chairman of the Tamil Nadu Eyal Isai Nataka Mandram. He organised a grand seminar cum Music festival at new Delhi in 1994 which brought out authentic information about Ananda Bhairavi and Sankarabharana ragas, to the appreciation of an eminent audience. Titles have come to him aplenty - Isai Perarignar by Tamil Isai Sangham, Madras in 1989, Chowdiah Award in 1992 and Sangeet Natak

Academy Award in 1993, being quite prominent.

Dr. CHITTI BABU

Dr. Chitti Babu was born on 13.10.1936 at Kakinada (A.P.) as the only child of Sri Challapalli Ranga Rao and Smt. Sundaramma. He started learning Veena at the tender age of five and gave a full fledged concert at the age of twelve and gained prominence as a child prodigy. His guru was the late Mahamahopadhyaya Dr. Emani Sankara Sastry, an eminent Vainika. The exquisite tonal quality and sheer versatality, which have been the magical hallmarks of this genius, have taken him to dizzy heights in his chosen path. Accolades from the cognoscente and the common rasikas alike have come in like a deluge. His music has transcended man made barriers taking along with it a part of our rich cultural heritage to almost every corner of the globe. *"Veena is my mission in life"* is his motto. He has performed all over India, and also in foreign countries like SriLanka, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Hungary, Malaysia, Singapore, West Germany (when that country was divided), U.S.A., Canada, Hongkong, London, Paris, Australia, U.S.S.R., Muscat, Bahrain and Japan. It may be something of a record for a *vainika* to have toured so many countries. These were between the years 1963 and 1993. He has given concerts not only in the Indian net work of DD and AIR, but also in foreign countries. His music directorship include films like *Rajaji's Dikkatra Parvathi, Kalai Kovil, Unnaipol Oruvan* and *Sri Raghavendra Vaibhavam.* He has plenty of titles and awards to his credit 28 in all and



they include the *Sangeeth Natak Academy Award Kalaimamani, Sangeetha Choodamani* and *Sapthagiri Sangeetha Vidwan Mani.* He has won medals, bracelets, chains and a silver veena too.

Special mention must be made of his *'Musings of a Musician'* a thematic music presented by a 50 - veena orchestra - made with seven sets with himself in the lead - the seven sets representing the 7 Swara Aksharas.

Dr. KARAIKUDI S. SUBRAMANIAN

Subramanian is a ninth generation Veena Player in the illustrious family of the great Veena Maestro Karaikudi Sambasiva Iyer - one of the famous Karaikudi Brothers. Their ancestors were court musicians in the palace of Pudukottai.

Fifty year old Subramanian got his M.A. in music and Ph.D. in Ethno musicology from the Wesleyan University, U.S.A. His doctoral thesis, South Indian Veena-Tradition and individual style

(3 volumes - 712 pages) was published by Micro film's University, An Arbor, Michigan, U.S.A. in 1986.

He has concerted, lectured and participated in seminars in India, Singapore, Malaysia, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Canada and the United States for more than 2 decades. His twin record album, Music Furvina (1975) played with his sister Smt. Rajeswari Padmanabhan, made by the Museum Fur Volkerkunde in Germany has won the Preis Per Deutschen Schalplatten Kritik Award in 1980. His Veena music is an illustrative adjunct in the creative compact disc of Prof. Tiruchi Sankaran, on laya. '*Laya Vinyas*' was made by the recording company: Music of the world USA. His compact disc Sunada along with Tiruchi Sankaran on the Mridangam has won the NAIRD 1993 Award.

His researches on music and the musical instruments were televised as a 13-episode serial Nadangi in 1986 by the Madras Doordarshan.

Now a Professor in the department of Indian Music, University of Madras, he has taught in foreign Universities as visiting artiste and Professor.

He is the founder of Brhaddhvani, Research and Training Centre of Music of the world. It has won a generous grant from the Ford Foundation, International recognition for his pioneering work has come in 1993.

Thirumathi.E. GAYATRI

'Isai Peroli' E. Gayatri is a child prodigy. She was a craze with the audience everywhere as Baby Gayatri for thirteen long years. There were no music festivals—Navarathi or Sri Ramanavami festivals, where Baby Gayatri was not presented. The

connoisseurs will only see her seated on the dais and divine and scintillating music will flow out of her Veena. The instrument was as big as the Baby and one would doubt whether she was playing or some divine hands were performing for her. The parents taught her music as 'a formality'. In just three years, she could give a concert. That was at Sri Parthasarathy Sabha, Triplicane when Gayatri was seven, one famous cine artiste from the audience wonderstruck by the skill displayed by the Baby, removed the gold bangles from her hands and presented the same to Gayatri. Then followed a torrent of concerts for the Baby and she fulfilled all engagements with great enthusiasm. She, has not only played all over India, but also abroad—U.S.A., U.K., France, Singapore, Malaysia and Oman. Her music has been recorded in EP/LP records, compact discs as well as cassettes. *"Sound of rivers"* - cassette and CD is an innovation of Gulam Ali's Ghazals on veena with orchestral support. Dr. Balamurali Krishna has utilised her services in his TV serials. She has done a *'Jugal Bandhi'* with him playing the viola.

Thiru.R. VISWESWARAN

Sri Visweswaran hails from a family of musicians. He is the nephew of the late great Carnatic musician. Sri G.N. Bala-Subramanian, Visweswaran represents two systems of music - vocal and instrumental.

He is the disciple of the Santoor Maestro, Pandit Shivkumar Sharma, under whom he has been studying for over a decade. With his Guru's blessings, he has been presenting Santoor recitals in Hindustani music on the stage as well as over the Television—Doordharshan network, BBV etc., His santoor performance in Canada, USA, UK, Germany, France, Malaysia, Singapore and the middle east countries have been widely appreciated. His recitals in major Indian cities such as Delhi, Madras, Bombay, Calcutta and Bangalore have also received rich encomiums.

Among his more prestigious concerts in India are those he presented before the Ex-President of India, Sri R. Venkataraman at Rashtrapathi Bhavan, December music season in Madras and Sangeet Research Academy, Calcutta. Abroad, his Munshi centenary concert at Bharatiya Vidhya Bhavan, London, the Jawahar Birth Centenary concert and Montelimar festival concert, both in France are noteworthy.

His proficiency in Hindustani music is complemented by his knowledge of Carnatic and Western music. He is considered a melodious singer and a composer too, besides being a Veena Player also. In 1970, he passed the LTCL examination on the classic guitar from Trinity College, London. That adds to his accomplishments as a Flamenco Guitarist, self taught at that!

Thiru.MANDOLIN U. SRINIVAS

One of the child prodigies of carnatic music, U. Srinivas shot into fame as a boy of 12, when he performed for the Indian Fine Arts Society in 1981, on the Mandolin, till then unknown to the music world. The deft way he handled this western instrument surprised one and all. He proved that gamakas - a speciality in carnatic music - can be easily produced on Mandolin.

Taking his early lessons from his father, *Uppalapu Satyanarayana*, he was trained later by *Rudraraju Subbaraju* who was a disciple of *Chembai Vaidyanatha* Bhagavathar. His father was working in an Orchestra playing clarionet. The family moved form *Palakole in Andhra* to Madras, the citadel of carnatic music, so that Srinivas could prosper as a Mandolin Artist. The expectation of the boy's father as well as his guru proved correct and Srinivas became an instant success. He became the State Artiste in 1984 in Tamil Nadu. He was selected for the *"Sangeetha Choodamani"* Award by Sri Krishna Gana Sabha in the International year of the Youth in 1985. He was made the first Isai Peroli by Karthik Fine Arts in 1990. *'Kalaimamani'* title was awarded to him in 1991. His Holiness Sri Jayendra Saraswathi of Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam nominated him as the Asthana Vidwan in 1990.

Making his debut of foreign visits,

Mandolin Srinivas thrilled the Germans in 1983. In 1984, he toured Australia, Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia. 1985 saw him in France - Festival of India, and USA and Canada welcomed him in 1987. He toured Mexico and Cuba too that year. It was London in 1989, when Srinivas

participated in the Bharat International festival in UK as well as the Golden Jubliee of Bharathiya Vidhya Bhavan, London. In 1990 he had his second tour of the USA and Canada as well as UK. In 1992 he was invited by the Olympic Music Festival in Spain (Barcelona). The same year saw Srinivas making his trips to UK, Canada and Japan. In 1993 and 94; he again went to USA and Canada and received the Honorary Citizenship in the State of Maryland and the District of Columbia respectively.

With his rich experience as a performer over the last dozen years, Srinivas has turned his attention to coaching too.

Thiru. DURGA PRASAD

There are not many practitioners of the instrument *"Gottuvadhyam"*, rechristened *"Chitra Veena"* by Ravi kiran. His father Allam Koteswara Rao, is the guru of Durga Prasad. Born on 25.10.1963, at Vijayawada, Durga Prasad started learning Gottuvadhyam from the age of twelve. His advanced training was from another eminent player of the instrument, late Sri. A. Narayana Iyer. He did his teacher's course in vocal during 1980-81 at the Music Academy and learnt a plethora of kritis from late Sri. Sandhiyavantanam Srinivasa Rao.

He performed in the National programme of music over the National Network in 1992, Along with his father. He was one of the Instumentalists to play at Thiagaraja Aradhana in 1994 at Thiruvaiyaru, and gave the first concert.

Music Academy selected him in 1990 as *"the best Gottuvadhyam Player"*. He had one overseas tour to Sri Lanka in 1983.

SIKKIL SISTERS

In the music world, we come across many pairs performing as vocalists, violinists, veena players and flutists. It may be a combination of two brothers, two sisters, or father and son, father and daugher or brother and sister, or husband and wife. The fact that most of the duos have succeeded in their performance is due to good understanding. It is again attributable to a facility to complement one another and the possibility of getting breathing time when one of the two does an alapana !

Silkkil sisters are the famous duo flutists doing extremely well. They have even formed a flute Trio at times when they bring in the daughter of the younger sister to join them in the performance. Sikkil Kunjumani is the elder sister and also a guru of her younger sister, Neela and the latter's daughter is Mala Chandrasekhar.

Kunjumani was trained by her paternal uncle, the well known flutist, Azhiyur Narayana Swami Iyer; both the sisters imbibed their musical talent from their father, Azhiyur Natesa Iyer, and their grand father Swami Iyer who both happened to be Mirudangam Vidwan.

The sisters, unassuming and not carried away by any emotion, have been a picture of harmony and play 'as one'. The younger one has been given more prominence due to her age' though Kunjumani too gives her full quota of music. They were honoured with the *'Kalaimamani'* title by the Tamil Nadu Eyal Isai Nataka Mandram in 1973, the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award and Sri Krishna Gana Sabha's *'Sangeetha Choodamani'* birudu in 1993. They have bagged *'best performance awards'* from the Music Academy in 1978, 1982 and 1986. They have performed all over India and abroad.

Thirumathi. MALA CHANDRASEKAR

Thirumathi Mala is the daughter of Thirumathi Neela, the younger of the famed Sikkil Sisters. She started learning flute from the sisters at the age of Eight and gave her first concert when she was just thirteen.

She has won a number of prizes in both inter school and inter collegiate competitions. Indian Fine Arts Society, has given programmes to her and she has won a number of prizes, including *'the Flute Mali Award'* as the best Flutist by Music Academy in 1993.

She has joined the Sikkil Sisters in some of their concerts to form a *'Flute Trio'*. Similarly, she had formed a group with Lalgudi G. Vijayalakshmi and Jayanthi Radhakrishnan to make a *'Flute-Violin Veena trio'* and has given several programmes.

Thirumathi Mala Chandrasekhar, is one of the examples of families of musicians

encouraging their offsprings to pursue their musical heritage. Such children get the best coaching possible in a 'Gurukula setup' and gain entry into the concert arena without much difficulty. Getting married into a musical family (that of M.S.) has given an added benefit to Thirumathi Mala.

Master SASHANK

A tiny tot — a four year old boy was taken to the Flute Maestro Mali some seven months before the latter's demise and he played a few kritis on his small flute to the Master. "He needs no more teaching in flute. Take him to some vocalist to be taught vocal music. He is sure to blossom into a flutist soon" were the magic words of Mali. That tiny tot was none other than Sashank, son of Sri. M.K. Subramaniam, who himself was a pupil of Dindigul S.P. Natarajan, a famed flutist and a disciple of Mali.

Sashank is another prodigy. At the age of a year and a half, he started identifying ragas. The initial lessons were taught by the father. When he was just four years, he had learnt 12 varnams and a few kritis. Karnataka Sangeeth Natak Academy granted him a scholarship when he was five years old, and as per Mali's advice, he was put under the tutelage of Sri R.K. Srikantan for three years. Thereafter, with a scholarship from the Central Government, he came under Sangeetha Kala Nidhi Palghat K.V. Narayanaswami, who put him on a higher pedestal.

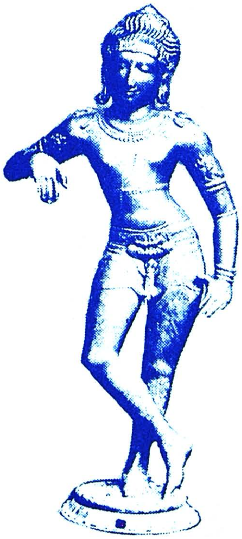
In 1989, when he was 11, his first concert was held in Australia, followed by another at Singapore. He played at the Music Academy in 1990. That was the start of a big career for Sashank, as he was asked to perform in the company of senior accompanying artists, by various sabhas in Madras and in other Indian cities. Already he has had a foreign trip to USA - and a successful music tour.

Master C.K. PATHANJALI & Master C.V. MAHALINGAM

Young C.K. Pathanjali, son of viola artists Kumaresan took to flute and

C.V. Mahalingam, son of Venkatesan joined his cousin to form a *'Flute Duo'*. The former was born on 7.7.1977 and the latter on 26.2.1978.

The two had rigorous training from their grandfather and started giving concerts from 1987. The arangetram was in the Holy presence of the Kanchi Paramacharya, Sri Chandrasekarendra Swamigal. Their second concert was at Thiruvaiyaru during the Thagaraja Aradhana. In addition to concerts in prestigious Sabhas at places like Madras, Bangalore, Mangalore, Neyveli, Karaikal and Kumbakonam etc., they play at Temples with devotion.



Thiru. N.M. MUTHUKOOTHAN

Puppet play or puppetry is an old traditional village art of Tamil Nadu where it is referred to as Bommalattam - a play enacted with puppets or dolls operated by gloves with dialogues and songs rendered

behind the screen. N.M. Muthukoothan has mastered this art in coordination with his son M. Kalaivanan. They render public service through their puppet show by handling subjects of reforms — like healthy environment, removal of false beliefs, advancement of women and public health. They educate the less literate and simple village folk by using their own straight language and thereby making them think and correct themselves. They follow the late Kalaivanar N.S. Krishnan in this — NSK used his humorous *'villu pattu'* to reform society.

Muthukoothan who will be completing the biblical age of three scores and ten in May this year (1995) started his career taking part in Dramas in the company of greats like M.G.R., and K.R. Ramaswami, taking comedy roles.

In 1952, he entered films and acted in various roles. He was awarded *"Kalaimamani"* title for his proficiency in *'Villupattu'*.

Dr. PADMA SUBRAMANYAM

Padma Subramanyam is an internationally reputed dancer with an active schedule in India and abroad, Daughter of Veteran film Director late K. Subramanyam and Meenakshi, a noted music composer and lyricist in Tamil and Sanskrit languages, Padma did a full course of conventional training in classical dance besides obtaining a Master's Degree in Music and then ventured into unexplored realms of research on *'Natya Sastra'* of sage Bharatha. She was awarded the Doctorate for her Thesis on Karanas in Indian Dance and Sculpture.

She has been widely acknowledged for creativity as Choregrapher, Music Composer and Dancer. She has to her credit a dozen dance dramas apart from more than fifty independent dance numbers. Her latest experimental choreography is her solo depiction of a few episodes of Ramayana set to the overture of *'Romeo and Juliet'* of Tchaikovsky. She is affectionately referred to as a constructive rebel who opened a new chapter in the history of Bharatha Natyam. In fact she has rechristened it as *'Bharatha Nrityam'*.

She has written many research articles and a couple of books. She has convened and conducted seminars and workshops on Dance and is deeply involved in Indological research.

She has been ordained by the

Paramacharya Sri Chandrasekharendra Saraswathi - of Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam to design a new set of 108 karana figures of Lord Siva and Goddess Parvathi in granite for a new temple of Lord Nataraja, built recently in Maharashtra. These figures are a sculptural codification of the 108 karanas which are dance units described in the Natya Sastra.

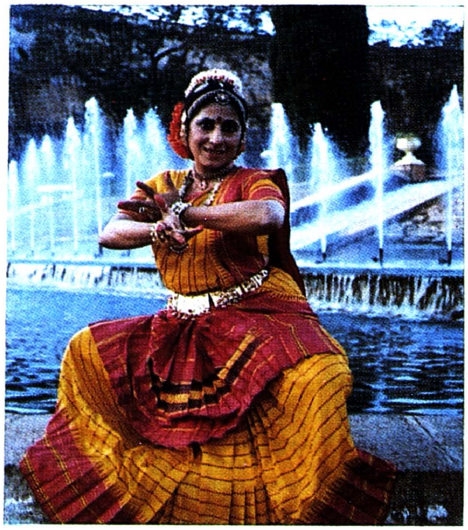
Padma has received many National and International Awards including

Padmasri from the President of India, the Sangeet Natak Akademy Award. The Tamil Nadu State Government awards and The Soviet Land Nehru Award. She was awarded the 5th Fukuoka Asian Cultural Prize in 1994 (Japan) for her outstanding work in theory and practice of classical dance through which she has contributed to the development of harmony between Asian countries. She also received the *'Kalidas Samman'* from the Government of Madhya Pradesh.

She has trained a number of dancers through her dance school *'Nrithyodaya'*, which has also produced a documentary film - T.V. serial for Doordarshan titled *'Bharatiya Natya Sastra'*. For this film, Padma received the 'Pancha janyam' Award from 'VIGIL' a Public opinion Forum.

Thirumathi.KOMALA VARADAN

The famous West Indian Cricketer, Garifield Sobers is often described as *"Four-in-one"* as he was a master of batting, medium fast and spin bowling and fielding.



Komala Varadan is *"many-in-one"* — she is a dancer, composer, choreographer, painter, writer, photographer and good speaker. She knows several languages. She is also deeply interested in carnatic music. She is a graduate and a post graduate in Journalism with Kulapathy Munshi's medal.

Having studied under eminent gems like Vazhuvur Ramaiah Pillai, she went on the stage when she was just nine as A.C. Komala. At the age of 13, she had a concert tour abroad. She has established her *"Kalaikoodam"* an institute of Art in 1983.

She has given dance recital all over India and abroad. She has also been holding various positions in many leading organizations like Sangeeth Natak Academy. The titles and awards conferred are very many not only in India but also in other countries like Japan and Singapore. She has participated in prestigious festivals like Khajuraho Dance Festival, Natyanjali in Chidambaram and many others. In 1988 she participated in an International Dance festival in France. She performed at the Elephanta festival in February 1994.

Thirumathi. CHITRA VISWESWARAN

Chitra Visweswaran *"brings an enlightened mind, cultural taste, refinement and grace to bear on her dance technique"* One of the finest exponents of Bharatha Natyam in India today, she is not only a sensitive dancer but also an excellent teacher and choreographer. Chitra started with classes in ballet at a very young age. Later she was trained in Manipuri and Kathak styles. She began learning Bharatha Natyam from Smt. T.A. Rajalakshmi from 1959 to 1970. She became the pupil of Vazuvur Ramaiah Pillai for 4 years. She was able to blend the best of three schools - Thanjavur, Vazhuvur and Pandanallur in her dance. She also learnt Carnatic music, Rabindra Sangeeth and also Contemporary dance.

In 1975, she founded her institution *"Chidambaram Academy"* of performing Arts and was the Director, Principal and Teacher. As a performing dancer, Chitra's record is enviable in national and International circuits. Titles have come to her at regular intervals—like the Padmashri, Kalaimamani, Nrithiya Choodamani, Sangeet Natak

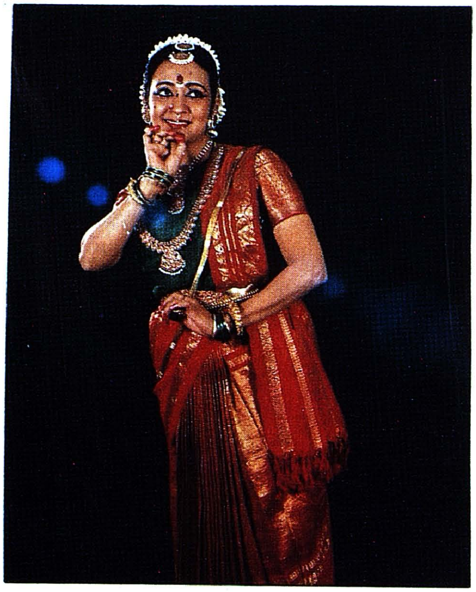
Academy Award etc., She has choreographed many dance dramas and presented them to audiences.

Thirumathi. SUDHARANI RAGHUPATHY

Tmt. Sudharani Raghupathy a unique and eminent artiste, has been in the field of Bharathanatyam for over four decades. A graduate of Philosophy and Sociology from the University of Mysore, she studied Modern Dance and Studio Arts at Randolp-Macon Woman's College Virginia, U.S.A. in 1964-65. Her eminent guru in the field of dance are Thiru V.S. Krishna Rao, Thiru Kittappa Pillai, and Mylapore Gowri Ammal, Sri T. Chowdiah and Madurai N.S. Krishnan for music and Eleanor Struppa, U.S.A for Modern Dance and Elaine St. Vincent U.S.A. in Western music. She has given Bharatha Natyam recitals in India, Europe, U.S.A., Venezuela, South America and recently at the Festival of India at the U.S.S.R. besides giving benefit performances for Schools, Colleges, Institutes for disabled and handicapped, orphanages, poor students funds etc., since 1953.

In 1970, Sudharani established *"Sree Bharatha Natyala"* for fine Arts in Madras. She has done a number of productions in group choregraphy and also produced dance dramas since 1960. In 1979, she received a grant from the Sangeet Natak Academy for the study of some traditional temple dances.

Many awards and titles have been conferred for her outstanding contribution to the field of Fine Arts. Some of them being *"Padmasri"* and Natya Kalanidhi in 1988,



Kalaimamani in 1980, Nrithya Choodamani in 1979. More than 70 artistes trained by Sudharani have adorned the stage.

Thirumathi.INDRA RAJAN

Hailing from a family of music and art of yester years, Tmt. Indra Rajan has stated that her grand mother Sundarambal was a great Bharata Natyam dancer and her mother Sundara Kamakshi was a musician of great repute. She started her Gurukulavasam at the tender age of six under Kutralam Kalai Kondal Sri Ganesan Pillai Wth her inborn talent and musical and dance heritage, she was able to master the intricacies of the art within three years. Her arangetram took place when she was nine. She continued her training for four more years before launching her career in dancing.

A dancer first and foremost, she has performed at all the reputable sabhas all over India. She also gave programme in Malaysia and Sri Lanka, where she had a record of more than 1000 programmes. She has done nattuvangam to renowned dancers like Tmt. Alarmel Valli, Tmt. Yamini Krishnamoorthy, with all of whom she has travelled abroad, to places like Hongkong, Malaysia, Dubai, Singapore and South Africa, Sangeet Natak Akademy recognised her talents by entrusting young aspirants to her for training.

Through her dance school, Vadhini Natyalaya, she has trained more than 1000 students from India and abroad and many of them are performing artists. She has choreographed many dance dramas like

Sakthi Darisanam, Kutrala Kuravanji as also some items in films.

She has secured quite a few awards including the *'Kalai Mamani'* of the Eyal Isai Nataka Mandram.

Thiru. NARASIMHACHARI & Thirumathi · VASANTHALAKSHMI

Often acclaimed by the press as the 'Made for each other' couple, Narasimhachari and Vasanthalakshmi are well established performers and teachers of the Bharathanatyam as well as Kuchipudi styles of Indian classical dance. Performing

professionally together since 1969, they have travelled extensively both in India and abroad, winning praise and accolades for their accomplished technique, sensitive expression, original choreography and sincere devotion to the art and building upon a sound tradition inherited from the best of masters — Rukmini Devi Arundale, Padmasri M.D. Ramanathan, Sri P.V.G.K. Sharma and others and without deviating from the spirit and integrity of that tradition. They have intelligently and sensitively introduced innovations in technique, content and presentation not merely for the sake of innovation but because of the possibilities inherent in such a rich tradition.

Narasimhachari is an artist blessed with multi-faceted talent, known as much for his musicianship as for his dancing; he is a rare combination of a composer, choreographer, singer and mirdangam player. Vasanthalakshmi who is respected for her precise, yet sweet nattuvangam, often contributes the lyrics for their compositions and assists her husband in all his choreography. Their contribution to the promotion of Dance extends to the training of students at their institution Kala Samarpana. Their disciples include their own daughters Lavanya and Lasya, who have been performing at home and abroad.

Together with their students, the *"charis"* have produced as many as 18 dance dramas on varied themes.

Dr. SRINIDIHI RANGARAJAN

Srinidhi can be aptly described as a wealth to the art of Dance. As a child of three, she started her training in the art, appeared on the stage at the age of five and had her *'official'* arangetram when she was just seven years old. In the following three years, she gave many performances not only in India, but also abroad.

She began her initial lessons in dance from the famous Vazhuvoor school and imbibed its style from her (late) Guru Kalaimamani Sri Swamimalai Rajaratnam to the fullest. Her achievements in her chosen field are really remarkable. She is the youngest artiste to perform at the first Natyakala Conference organised by Sri Krishna Gana Sabha, Madras in 1981. Thereafter she has performed a number of times in the ever popular *'December Music Festival'* at Music Academy Sri Krishna Gana Sabha and other Sabhas in Madras. She obtained Dr. M.G.R. Award for the best dancer from the Music Academy in 1988-89.

She took part in Sangeet Natak Akademi's *'Yuva Utsav'* in 1986 at Shimla, Gungroo Festival at Bhopal in the same year, Khajuraho Festival in 1994, and in the Natyanjali Festival as well as Mamallapuram Dance Festival. She has been sought by many festival organisers like Kumbh Mela at Allahabad, De'june Festival at Pondicherry, Nishagandhi festival at Trivandrum to give her performance. She considers her special performance done in the presence of the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu Puratchi Thalaivi Dr. J. Jayalalitha at the International Women's Day Celebration and at the dinner hosted for the World Bank Chairman, as memorable.

Srinidhi is a Medical graduate and belongs to a new breed of young professionals who are deeply committed to the art they practise and the profession they have chosen and are striving to achieve excellence in both.

Thirumathi. SUJATHA SRINIVASAN

Sujatha Srinivasan, daugher of Sri Srinivasan of the Higgin bothams, had the fortune of learning dance under several gurus like Swamimalai Sri S.K. Rajarathnam, Thirumathi Chitra Visweswaran,

Upudpi Sri Lakshminarayana and Thirumathi Kalanidhi Narayanan. She has assimilated the best in all her famous gurus. Her initial lessons were learnt from Thirumathi Lalitha at the Saraswathi Gana Nilayam. Her Arangetram took place in 1977 and then started a hectic career which took her to the nook and corner of India to give programmes. The Sangeet Natak Akademy had invited her to participate in Dance Festivals at New Delhi and Bangalore, as also at Khajuraho (1987). She was perhaps the youngest dancer to take part in the Khajuraho Festival.

Awards came to her from many institutions. The M.G.R. Memorial prize instituted by the Madras Music Academy for talented young dancer, was won by her for the first time.

She had also choreographed a special feature with the compositions of Papanasam Sivan and presented it before M.S. Subbulakshmi and D.K. Jayaraman in 1990 and received their appreciation. For Ramalingar Pani Mandram, she did a feature with some of Ramalinga Swamigal's *"Arut Pa"*.

Sri Lanka was the first foreign country where she gave programmes. Then came Geneva and Paris followed by Pittsburgh USA where she performed in the Temple of Lord Venkateswara. She has settled in Ohio, USA after marriage.

Selvi.AKILA SANKAR

Akila Sankar is a disciple of the famous Chitra Visweswaran. She is a serious minded student of the art form, learning both the theoretical and practical aspects of Bharata Natyam.

She had her arangetram in 1987. Since 1989, she holds the central government CCRT Junior Scholarship for dance, which is enabling her to further her interest in this divine art form. She is also the 1989 Balasaraswathi Endowment Talent promotion Awardee given by Sri Krishna Gana Sabha.

In 1992, The Tamil Nadu Eyal Isai Nataka Manram sponsored her programme in Madras and three other cities of Tamil Nadu.

She has given more than forty solo programmes and also taken part in the Dancedramas produced by Chitra Visweswaran.

In 1991, she had the privilege of touring the U.K., France and the Netherlands and in 1993 Sri Lanka, with her guru's troupe.

Considering the fact that she is still in her teens (she is just 17). Akila may be expected to garner more and more glories like her guru, in the future.

Selvi. G. LAKSHMI PRIYA

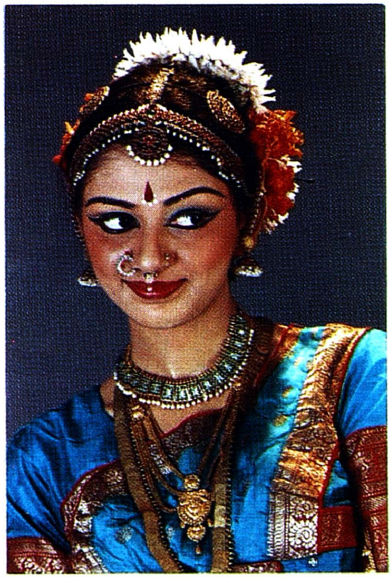
The present day youth is enthusiastic about the world of art. We see a number of young persons coming up in the Dance field. It, however, appears that in the field of classical dance, more and more youngsters

are emerging perhaps due to the fact that there are a number of eminent dance teachers to train them up and also give them opportunity to appear on the stage. Narasimhachari and Vasanthalakshmi have proved to be good teachers and through their dance institution Kala Samarpana, helped many young artists to make the grade. Eighteen year old Lakshmi priya is one of them, though she is still a student doing her degree course in History. She has already made history on the dance horizon.

Her arangetram was held on 20th February 1992 and within two years after that, she has to her credit many programmes. Sankarabharanam Trust, Sri Krishna Gana Sabha, Music Academy, Bharat Kalachar, T.V.G's Academy of Indian Music and Arts (AIMA), *Shivali Association* and Kala Samarpana have all given her programmes. The Indian Fine Arts Society chose her as the best dancer at the end of 1993-94 season.

Thirumathi. PRIYA SUNDARESAN

Daughter of well known dancer and



Choreographer, Kalaimamani Saraswathi Sundaresan Priya learnt from her mother both Bharata Natyam and Kuchupudi, at a very early age. She has captured the famous Pandanallur style and tradition in Bharata natyam, that is known for its sculpturesque pose, perfection, grace and elegance. Commanding a tall lithe figure, and a smiling countenance, she has turned out to be an exquisite and consummate performer and exhibits finesse, dexterity and depth. She has won unqualified plaudits from critics and connoisseurs. Priya has been extensively performing and has so for completed over 200 programmes and nearly 40 television programmes. She has toured and performed in the USA, Andaman and Nicobar and Maldives Islands sponsored by the Indian Council of Cultural Relations.

A graduate of Madras University. Priya got a talent scholarship from the Department of culture, Govt. of India. Her dedicative spirit joined by a passion for artistic purity has enabled her to maintain in her professional pursuits, the best tradition that these art forms are celebrated for.

Selvi. LAVANYA AND Selvi. LASYA

Illustrious children of the illustrious dance couple Narashimhachari and Vasanthalakshmi, sisters Lavanya and Lasya have benefited from growing up in an environment wherein fine arts and the creative process are normal accompaniments to everyday life.

They had their coaching from their parents in their Natya Samarpana Institution. Sri M. Venkatakrishnan of *'Sankarabharanam Trust'* provided an opportunity to make their first appearance on the stage in Nov. 1988.

Thiru. A. ZAKIR HUSSAIN

It is not often that one comes across

an individual belonging to one religion absorbing the essence of another religion and exhibit his knowledge in the form of dance. A. Zakir Hussain, born as a Muslim, has taken great interest in Hindu Mythology and its rich traditions and has chosen Bhrathanatinyam as his profession, arising from his passion for arts. He could not have selected a better guru than Thirumathi Chitra Viseswaran to hone him as a consummate dancer. With a scholarship from the Government of India, Zakir Hussain has been getting vigorous training from Chitra Visweswaran, who has exposed him to art lovers in India and abroad, by including him in her troupe whenever and wherever she is invited to perform. Zakir Hussain is also well versed in Tamil language and he has already come out with some beautiful poems.

Dr. VEMPATI CHINNA SATYAM

Born on 25th October 1929 in the village of Kuchipudi in Krishna Dist., Andhra Pradesh, Vempati Chinna Satyam learnt his early dance lessons from Tadepalli Sri Peranjya Sastri for three years, while attending school. Later he went to the great guru, Vedantham Lakshminarayana Sastry.

Vempati Chinna Satyam has choreographed a dozen dance dramas. Two of them in Tamil and Telugu Padmavati Srinivasam, Krishna Parijatham, Hara—vilasam and Siva Danurbangam are immensely popular. He has trained first rank dancers like Subha Naidu, Manju Bhargavi, Kalpalatika, Sobha Natarajan, Padma Menon. A branch of his Academy is functioning at Vishakhapatnam, Vempatti is a recipient of innumerable titles including the Sangeet Natak Akademies fellowship, Kalaimamani and the Kalidas Samman of the Madhya Pradesh Government.

Thiru.DHANANJAYAN

Thiru V.P. Dhananjayan and Thirumathi Santha Danajayan make the formidable *'Dhananjayans'* who have been

rendering yeoman service to the art of Dance—Bharatanatya.

Both are post graduates with distinction from Kalakeshetra. They had 18 years, service in Kalakeshetra as leading dancers in Rukmini Devi's dance drama productions. They have not only imbibed the dance technique of the great Kalakeshetra, but also the management skills of the organisation. This has helped them to start a teaching Institution (for dance) named Bharata Kalanjali, Academy of Indian dance and music.

While pursuing their career as Bharatanatyam couple dancers, all over the globe, they allot time to coach students meticulously and fashion them into professional dancers. As teachers, they are highly regarded gurus in the field. Students from all parts of the world seek their coaching.

As choreographers, the Dananjayans are considered as one of the best in India. They have to their credit more than 25 Dancedramas, both traditional and innovative and of international standard. Special mention must be made of their National Integration venture titled *'Aikya Bharatam'*, which has been played at several places, receiving much accolades. The dance drama are in different languages - Sanskrit, Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam and Hindi. Items in Marathi and Bengali have also been composed.

The couple have received National and International Awards - Nritya Choodamani of Sri Krishna Gana Sabha, Kalaimamani, Award from UNESCO, being the prominent ones.

Dhananjayan has written a book - A Dancer in Dance. He is the President of ABHAI - Association of Bharathanatyam Artists of India, and a member of Central Sangeet Natak Akademy, Eyal Isai Nataka Manram and a few more institutions. He has conducted seminars and workshops on dance.

Thirumathi-KRISHNA KUMARI NARENDRAN

Thirumathi Krishnakumari Narendran, the director of 'Abinaya Natyalaya' is a famous dance guru well known for her inspiring Choreography and Nattuvangam. She made her debut as a dance artiste on 18.1.1964. It was another dance master, Tmt. Indra Rajan, who moulded her into a fine dancer and dance teacher. She has an extensive knowledge of the art of Bharatanatyam. She *posesses the qualities of keen observation and assimilation that can be seen in excellent teachers*, exponents and grandmasters and masters of the glorious past as also the popular present.

Tmt. Narendran has been producing a new ballet or dance drama every year. Some of her much acclaimed productions include *Meenakshi Kalyanam Laya Vinyaasam, Navagraha Deivangal, Panniru Madha Bhavani Vizha, Arul aadal* and *Karunai Kadal Kandhavel.* Each one of them had many shows and the first one is nearing the half-century mark.

'Sakthi Chakram' a recent production is a mammoth production involving nearly sixty students, the music for which has been composed by Sri Kunnakudi Vaidyanathan.

'Dravida Sakthi' one of her productions describes the tremendous achievements of the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu. Puratchi Thalaivi Dr. J. Jayalalitha, She is also proud of having received the *"Kalaimamani"* title in 1993. Her creative talents continue to be ever growing, ever flowing and remains ever green.

Thirumathi.K.J. SARASA

Karaikkal J. Sarasa was born in 1937 and hails from a family whose ancestors were court musicians for the Thanjavur Kings. She

is the sister of the legendary Sri Dhandayuthapani Pillai. She started learning Bharathanatyam under the master Vazhuvoor Ramaiah Pillai when she was seven. She did *'Gurukulam'* with Vazhuvoor Ramaih Pillai for fifteen years. She has taught to hundreds of students from India and abroad. Some of them are running schools of their own emulating their teacher in producing dancers, Sarasa turned out be a *'guru'* like her own guru. She has produced and choreographed many dance dramas. She has herself conducted many performances all over the world for various cultural agencies. She received an award of Sangeet Natak Akademy in 1992, for her outstanding contributions and enviable achievements in Bharathanatyam. She has won many more titles like Kalaimamani, Natyaselvam etc. She has recently been appointed an Honorary Director, Tamilnadu Government Music Centre.

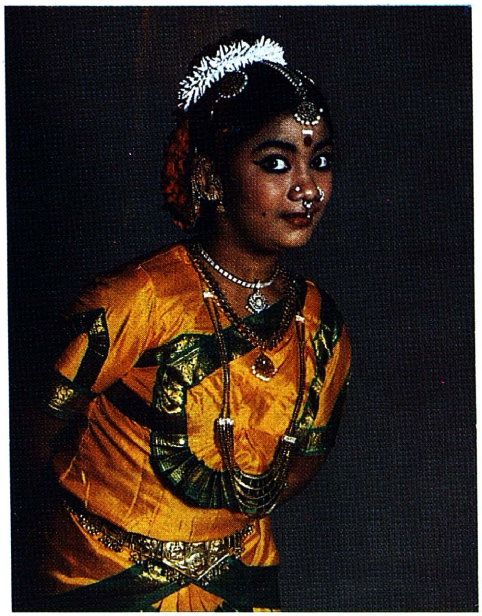
Selvi. KAVITHA RAMU

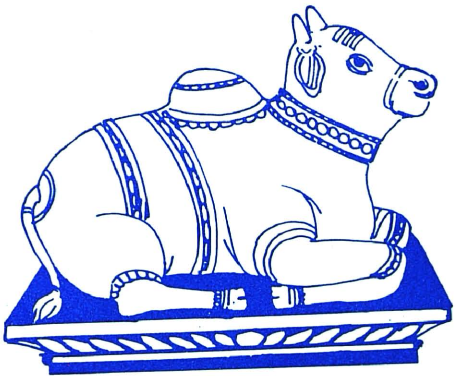
A senior disciple of Kalaimamani Smt. K.J. Sarasa, Kavitha Ramu is performing as a member of Sarasalaya on many occasions, besides giving programmes individually. She had attracted the attention of dance critics, one of whom has described her dance as "one of verve and vivacity, espically in varnam, a composition of the Thanjavur Quartette, Swami Ninne Korinavu in Ragamalika. Kavitha's expressive abhinaya held sway over the audience. She presented the concluding Tillana in Todi with clean distinction in style and accurate footwork. The simple and complicated came easily alike to Kavitha". High praise indeed!

Having been groomed by her versatile guru in Vazhuvoor style, Kavitha has blossomed into a fine dancer and wherever she has performed, she has been the cynosure of the audience.

Selvi. HEMA SRIPAL

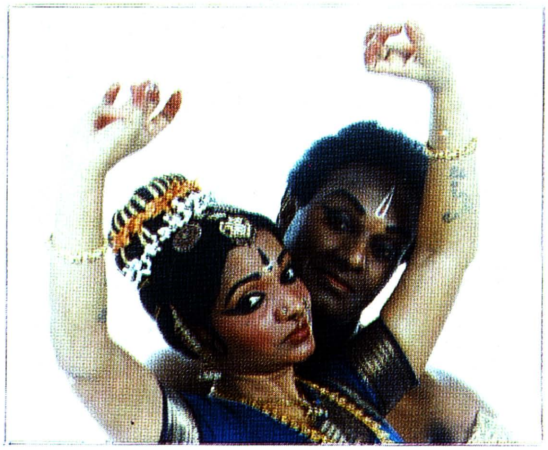
Selvi Hema Sripal is a disciple of Kalaimamani K.J. Sarasa one of the finest exponents of Bharathanatyam. Her arangapravesam took place at Bharatia Vidya Bhavan, Madras 1989. Since then she has prsented over fifty programmes, notable amongst them being at Lord Murugan Temple, London, Fair Fields, Lowa, U.S.A., Washinton, Shankarabaranam Trust, R.R. Sabha, Sri Krishna Gana Sabha, Bharat Kalachar, Chidambaram Natyanjali Festival. Fifteen years old Selvi Hema Sripal is dedicated to Bharata Natyam and wants to do research in this field.





Thiru. and Thirumathi. RAJA RADHA REDDY

World renowned dancing couple Raja and Radha Reddy have given a new dimension to the age old art of Kuchipudi dance. Without sacrificing its traditional poetry or dramatic sensibility with rare



excellence and perfection of technique, they have earned the credit for Kuchipudi's high ranking to-day among the major dance forms of India.

They hail from Andhra Pradesh, the birth place of Kuchipudi style of Indian classical dance. Having trained themselves under eminent kuchipudi acharyas like Sri Vedantam Prahalada Sarma and P.V.G. Krishna Sarma, Raja and Radha Reddy in the true style of Guru-Sishya Parampara' are engaged in passing on their art to young and promising pupils at their Institution 'Natya Tarangam' in New Delhi. The couple through their togetherness and perfect unison portray the masculine vigour and lyrical charm of the classical pairs of Hindu Mythology such as *'Shiva-Parvathi'*; *Rama-Sita* and *Krishna-Radha*, thus identifying themselves with the twin concept of purusha and prakrithi, the male-female principle in Indian Philosophy. In precise postures and refined patterns the Duo enliven the magnificent sculptures chiselled in the ancient temples of India.

The unique art of Raja and Radha Reddy has found befitting official recognition through the award of *'Padmasri'* in 1984. Already in 1974, they had the honour of being invited as the first Indian dancers to participate in the International Dance Festival of Avignon in France and Salzburg in Austria. The couple's contribution to the Festivals of India in the USA and the U.K. were considered outstanding.

The dancing Duo received the prestigious *"Sangeet Natak Akademy Award"* from the President of India in February 1992.

Selvi.SUDHA

The Kuchipudi dance tradition owes its name to a little village in Andhra Pradesh. From that tiny beautiful village, the art has spread other parts of the country and developed with a great momentum. Many dancers practising Kuchipudi have imparted the art to a number of pupils who have carried the torch to various parts of the world and spread the glory of this art.

Sudha is a young lady who has taken a liking for this branch of dance. She had undergone rigorous training from a very young age under the great master Vempatti Chinna satyam and still continues the training under Manju Bhargavi, a shining disciple of Vempatti.

She takes scrupulous care and great pains to perform to perfection. Her exquisite charms and sensuous grace are to be seen in her Abhinaya. Her delicately joyful style, her grace and majesty are captivating. She leaves an indelible impression in the hearts of the connoisseurs. Her winsome stage presence and attractive poses remind the viewers of ancient sculptural beauty.

Thirumathi. BHARATI SHIVAJI

A lady born in Tamil Nadu residing at New Delhi, taking up an in-depth study into the aesthetics of Mohini Attam, an art of Kerala soil is no doubt a very versatile person. That she has won the coveted *'Niruthya Choodamani Award'* of Sri Krishna

Gana Sabha at its Natyakala Conference in 1994 speaks volumes of her monumental work.

A rare combination of Satvika, talent and grace, Bharati Shivaji's personality is an ideal combination of attributes necessary for the work in which she has devoted herself completely. Here is a dancer who combines a naturally endowed form and face for dance with the touch stone of total involvement.

It was at the behest of Smt. Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya and under a fellowship scheme from the Sangeet Natak Academy, She began researching and reconstructing the Mohiniyattam repertoire. Actually, it may be called rejunuation of the Keralam Art. Her book - *"The Art of Mohiniyattam"* and her translating her theoretical research into enriching the graceful movements of Mohiniyattam - the dance of the enchantress - have paid her rich dividends.

Bharati has propagated this dance through numerous performances in India and abroad and captivated the audiences. In addition, she has founded 'Kala Ambalam' at Delhi for the propagation of Mohiniyattam. In this, she is greatly assisted by her daughter Vijayalakshmi.

She has produced unusual choreographic works and dance dramas in the Mohiniyattam style *'Chandrotsavam'* *'Deva Gita'* and *'Suna Stuthi'*. The Sur Singar Sansad in Bombay has awarded the title of *'Nritya Vilas'*. The Delhi administration has given the *'Sahitya Kala Parishad Samman'*.

She has also produced a documentary on the dance style of her choice for Doordarshan.

Thiru. R.S. MANOHAR

Born in 1925 in Salem, Tamil Nadu, Lakshmi Narayanan was educated at the Ramakrishna Mission School and later graduated from Pachayappa's College majoring in history. While in school and

College, he took part in Drama production, when Lakshminarayanan stepped (in lieu of his absent class mate) into the title role of *"Manohara"* the young man identified himself with the character so completely that he came to be called *"Manohar"* since then.

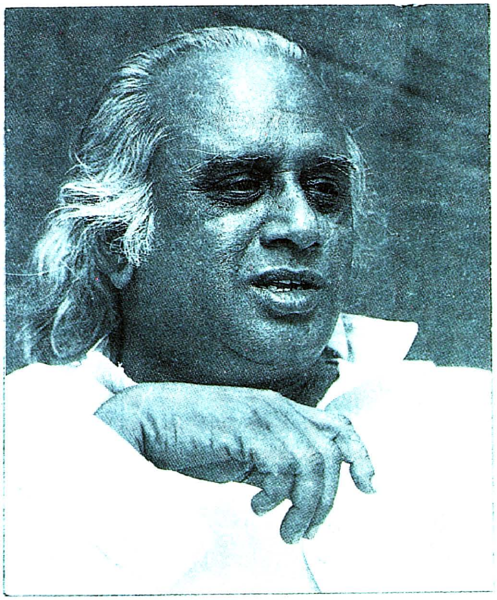
R.S. Manohar's heart was in drama. So while his film career was at its peak, he formed the drama troupe–'National Theatres– in 1954, with the inaugural venture being *'Inba Nall'*. It was *'Lankeswaran'* however that changed the course of his life and career. Though in the beginning he hesitated to do a mythological role *'with a huge moustache'* he took up the challenge and played the role of Ravana in *'Lankeswaran'*, which proved to be the beginning of the actor's triumphal march through the scenes of history and mythology. His romance with the drama nudged cinema to the wings - though he obliged - few producers who insisted that he should star in their films - more than 200 films with Manohar as the Villain ! *'Lankeswaran'* was Manohar's tour-de-force. It was bold and revolutionary. Sita was depicted as Ravana's daughter. It was a phenomenal hit and presumably was the raison d'etre for his subsequent plays glorifying anti-hero. His explanation : "No one is wholly good or bad. I only emphasis the virtuous elements that form part of any man's make-up and that too without hurting anybody's sentiment. Is not the great Ravana known by his veena rather than any other symbol ?"

Manohar has concentrated on larger than life characters *'Dronar'*, *'Malikkafur'*, *'Indrajit'*, *'Soorapadman'*, *'Sukrachariyar'*, *'Parasuramar'*, *'Kumbakaranan'* and others - with special effects, split sound co-ordination and colossal efforts which have kept his audiences wonder struck. After a long gap he has come back with a thunder with his *"Thirunavukkarasar"*.

He is playing another role as the member-Secretary of Tamil Nadu Eyal Isai Nataka Mandram. He has a string of titles including the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award.

Thiru S. RAMANUJAM

'Experimental play' by S. Ramanujam will be a novel event. He has been a Professor and Head of Department of Drama



at the Tamil University, Thanjavur with the area of specialisation being *"Children's Theatre'*.

Born to Sri M.A. Seshan and Smt. Renganayaki in 1935, Ramanujam after completing M.A. (English) as also obtaining a Diploma in Dramatics (NSD Delhi), has served as a resource person at various centres dealing with the subject of theatre and also participated in Drama festivals and workshops. He has directed 40 plays which include Hindi, Tamil, Malayalam and English.

He has written books in Tamil and Malayalam - subjects being Drama as well as plays and also contributed articles.

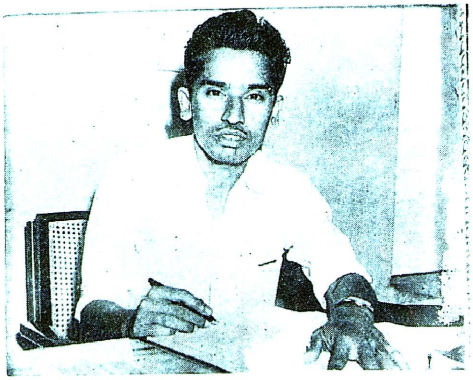
He holds membership in various Academic bodies like Board of Studies, Faculties and Examination Boards in nine Universities. He has been recognised as a Theatre expert by a number of Institutions like the Ford Foundation, South Zone Cultural Centre and Sangeet Natak Akademy.

Thiru.R. PALANISWAMI

A dramatist of repute Sri. Ira Palaniswami was born in Rasipuram of Salem District in 15.7.1935 to Sunil Peddakka and Sri EramaLingaiah, who was a Telugu by birth. Palaniswami studied in an elementary school upto 6th standard (and could not pursue his education beyond that due to financial difficulty). At the age of 11, he entered a drama troupe called Iyyappa Nataka Sabha and shifted to Sri Bala Murugan Troupe Company where the famed Film Director Sri A.P. Nagarajan was the teacher. After a stint of three years there, he changed over to Devi Nataka Sabha in 1949 and was taking acting roles for four years. He also started writing songs in 1949 and from 1952, Devi Nataka Sabha used him as a lyricist too.

He was brought to Madras by Nadigavel M.R. Radha in 1954. His first full length dramas 'Nallapillai and Kulappen were staged in 1956. The same year he produced the songs for the famous drama *'Illankeswaran'* for R.S. Manohar. This helped him to become Film Lyricist for more than 25 films.

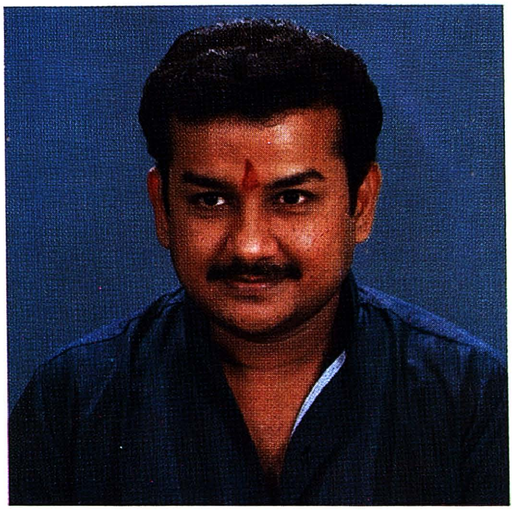
In 1985, he started his own drama troupe 'Nadaka Pannai' and enacted dramas



like 'Kaviya Nayaki' Maa Veeran Vaali etc. In 1987.His dramas appeared as books and he started his own publication, Pazhani Pathippagam and secured a prize from Tamil Nadu Government. The caravan is still marching .

Master V. SRIDHAR

Starting as a child artist when he was five, V. Sridhar has been popularly known as *'Master Sridhar'*. He was introduced in a



leading role in Perarignar Anna's Tamil film, *'Edhayum Thangum Idhaiyam'*. He had an instant success and became a popular child artist of the Film Industry and was featured in more than 100 films - not only in Tamil, but also in Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam and Hindi. Prominent among the films he has acted are Karnan, Kandan Karunai, Enga Pappa, Dheerga-Sumangali, Odum Nadhi and Iru Vallavargal etc.

Sridhar is a talented Story Writer, Lyric Composer, Director and Producer. His own dramatic troupe *'Sree Chakra Stage'* has staged many dramas, the most popular among them being *'Sri Adhi Sankarar'* - Sridhar himself taking the title role. The play was enacted more than 250 times throughout India. It fetched him many awards, as best actor, best director and best producer from various organisations. He was also blessed by His Holiness Kanchi Paramacharya. The Kanchi Kamakoti Golden Jubliee Committee selected him as the best actor.

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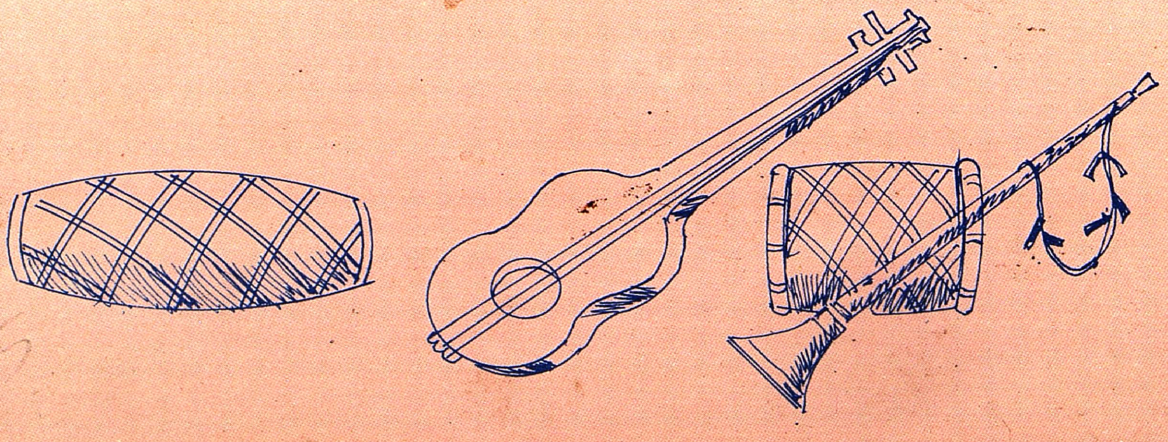
யாதும் ஊரே யாவரும் கேளிர் !